

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 519

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: DISCUSSION IN PYITHU HLUTTAW

REF: RANGOON 2958

1. NARCOTICS WAS MAJOR TOPIC OF DISCUSSION IN SESSION OF PYITHU HLUTTAW (PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY) CONCLUDED OCTOBER 28. IMPETUS WAS NEWS RELEASE ON BURMA ARMY SUCCESSES AGAINST TRAFFICKERS IN SHAN STATE (REFTEL). INTERPELLATION OF HOME AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER, U KO KO, LED TO REVELATION OF IMPRESSIVE FIGURES IN ANTI-NARCOTICS FIELD OVER PAST YEAR AND A HALF AND, LATER, STATEMENT BY U KO KO EXPLAINED GUB THREE-STAGED APPROACH TO NARCOTICS CONTROL: COMBATTING DRUG ABUSE, TREATMENT AND EDUCATION, AND REHABILITATION.

2. COMBAT STRATEGY FURTHER BROKEN DOWN INTO THREE PHASES: DESTRUCTION OF POPPY FIELDS (FOLLOWED BY CROP SUBSTITUTION); PROHIBITION OF MANUFACTURE, TRANSPORTATION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTICS (A POLICE AND ARMY FUNCTION), AND PREVENTION OF DRUG

ABUSE THROUGH LEGAL ACTION AND EDUCATION. DETAILED PLANS OF APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS AND IDENTIFICATION OF RESPONSIBLE MINIS-
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TRIES ALSO CARRIED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS. (COMMENT: IN ESSENCE, U

KO KO OUTLINED UNFDAC PROGRAM AND GOALS. GUB AND UN OFFICIALS BOTH BELIEVE REMARKS TO BE KO KO'S IMPRIMATURE FOR GO AHEAD ON UNFDAC PROGRAM, EXPECTING IT TO BE IMPLEMENTED ON OR ABOUT JANUARY 1, 1976).

3. PYITHU HLUTTAW PASSED RESOLUTION URGING POPULACE TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION. RESOLUTION AND U KO KO'S REMARKS DREW EDITORIAL COMMENT FROM NEARLY EVERY BURMA NEWSPAPER. COMMENTARY WAS UNANIMOUSLY IN FAVOR OF NATIONAL CAMPAIGN, THOUGH SOME EDITORIALS CHOSE TO PASS BLAME FOR DRUG PROBLEM TO OTHERS, I.E., BRITISH COLONIALISTS AND WESTERN HIPPIES. PERHAPS BEST EDITORIAL WAS IN "GUARDIAN", OCTOBER 29, WHICH ENDORSED ALL OUT EFFORT AGAINST DRUG ABUSE, BUT ALSO WARNED THAT PROFIT MOTIVATION IN ILLICIT TRADE IS SO GREAT THE PROBLEM WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO SOLVE. IT CAUTIONED TOO AGAINST AMATEUR APPROACH

ANTI-DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION NOTING THIS CAN PROMPT YOUTH TO EXPERIMENTATION IN DRUGS. EDITORIAL SUGGESTS EXPERTS IN FIELD ARE NEEDED AND EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WOULD BE VALUABLE.

4. MOMENTUM APPEARS TO HAVE CARRIED OVER INTO PRESS COVERAGE OF DRUG-ORIENTED NEWS ARTICLES. EVENTS IN OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES ARE RECEIVING ATTENTION AND RECENT STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN FRASER AT UN ON ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS OF TURKEY, MEXICO AND BURMA GIVEN FRONT PAGE EXPOSURE.
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